

Southern Nevada District Office
District Manager's Report
Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
July 2015

Staffing Updates: Mark Spencer (Red Rock/Sloan Field Manager) accepted a new role as District Manager in Anchorage. Catrina Williams will be acting 60 days. Chris Glode (Assistant Fire Management Officer) accepted a position at the National Interagency Fire Operations Center. Brian Cresto will detail as District Fire Management Officer; Clay Stephens as Assistant Fire Management Officer and Justin Cutler as Fire Operations Supervisor.

BLM Hosts Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone (SEZ) Mitigation Implementation Workshop:

The development of three solar projects in the Dry Lake SEZ will generate more than \$5 million in fees to offset the unavoidable impacts to the Mojave Desert. To determine out how to best spend these funds, the BLM completed the Regional Mitigation Strategy in 2012. On May 27, the solar energy projects were approved and BLM sought further stakeholder input on implementing the mitigation strategy. On June 16, 23 participants engaged in an all-day workshop to share information and develop alternative mitigation implementation scenarios. The goals included listening to stakeholders and understanding their expectations and mitigation approaches;(2) sharing BLM perspective; (3) consolidating both perspectives into a series of scenarios so that BLM can develop a mitigation implementation plan. The wide range of interests of participants included environmental, development, and consultants, in addition to county, state, and federal stakeholders. BLM will use the input from the workshop to develop a proposed Mitigation Implementation Plan to guide actions funded from the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone mitigation fees.

Southern Nevada District Office Participates in International Migratory Bird Day: In April, Clark County Wetlands Park hosted the second Annual International Migratory Bird Day in Las Vegas. This free event was successful due to the multi-agency efforts of the Clark County Wetlands Park, Outside Las Vegas Foundation, Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee, Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado River Multi Species Conservation Program, Nevada Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Audubon Society, and the Bureau of Land Management.

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day: The Southern Nevada District recognizes the importance of introducing youth to its multiple use mission and supports "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day." This year, SNDO hosted 14 kids ranging in age from two to 14. In the morning, we asked them all to draw a picture or write what they thought BLM stood for as well as what they thought their parents did all day. After lunch where everyone enjoyed "Big Hero 6" and they hung out with their parents.

SNDO Joins Congressman Heck's Career Fair: On May 4, SNDO joined Congressman Joe Heck at a career fair to provide information on local vacant positions and vacancies throughout the BLM. Our goal is to educate the public on the BLM's mission, describe the job opportunities within this great agency and outline the hiring process to members of the public. Congressman

Heck and Senator Reid host two jobs fairs each year that SNDO attends. On average, we make contact with about 50-60 people at each career fair.

PVC Mine Marker Survey: Southern Nevada District Office biologists and a Nevada Department of Wildlife biologist conducted aerial surveys over parts of Clark and southern Nye County in late May to look for open pipe PVC mine markers used to stake boundaries for mining claims. The helicopter flights were focused on areas known to have mining claims on BLM managed public lands. Once we flew over the pockets of mining areas, we GPSed the mine markers we saw. Last fall/winter, BLM fire crews pulled markers identified in the previous year's flight and our plan is to do the same thing this fall/winter. These hollow markers are lethal traps to migratory birds and other wildlife that climb inside and are unable to escape due to the slick surfaces of the inner pipes. These markers attract birds that think they are good nesting sites, but the birds get trapped in the markers and perish.

Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month: On May 13, Las Vegas Field Office organized and hosted a celebration for the Southern Nevada District that included ethnic Polynesian music, authentic cuisine, and a lecture on the Pacific islands of French Polynesia. The staff readily complied with the aloha-type attire was greeted with traditional leis. It was a great way to recognize our Pacific Islander Heritage, to learn about traditions from Polynesia, and enjoy some wonderful food.

Fire and Aviation

Fire Restrictions: On May 15 the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Nevada Division of Forestry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service implemented fire restrictions in Southern Nevada. Interagency fire restrictions prohibit:

- building and/or using a campfire or charcoal stove (using portable stove using gas, jellied petroleum or pressurized liquid fuel OK)
- welding or operating an acetylene torch with open flames (except by permit)
- using any explosive (except by permit)
- using fireworks or firing a tracer
- operating an off-road vehicle without a spark arrestor

BLM also prohibited steel jacket ammunition and explosive targets prohibited as they are known fire starters. Smoking is allowed in an enclosed vehicle only.

Wildland Fire Awareness Trail Half Marathon and 5K: In conjunction with Wildfire Awareness Month, the SNDO Office of Fire and Aviation hosted the third annual half marathon and 5K race event at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area on May 30. The event sold out to the first 300 entrants who were rewarded with some of the best trails in Southern Nevada. This fun-filled event brings awareness to wildland fire areas and helps us to remember the awesome fire fighters that help protect these vast beautiful public lands. Afterwards, participants stayed for a family-friendly event to explore fire engines and other apparatus; visited with federal, state and local firefighters and learned about the Living With Fire Program.

Law Enforcement

SNDO LEOs Continue Student Outreach: In early April, Southern Nevada District Law Enforcement Officers continued their long-standing tradition of outreach to local students. On April 9, two rangers spoke to more than 100 students at the UNLV Criminal Justice Career Fair. They promoted the BLM law enforcement program and emphasized resource protection vs. typical beat cop. The annual UNLV Criminal Justice Career Fair is open to students of all majors. On April 10, a ranger conducted mock interviews for high school students taking college courses at her alma mater UNLV. She interviewed about 50 Nevada State High School students and awarded two \$50 scholarships.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act

BMX Park Grand Opening: SNDO attended the grand opening of the City of Henderson BMX track at the Whitney Mesa Park on April 25. The track is a part of the Whitney Mesa Preserve project, which was funded for \$19.3 million through SNPLMA. The project includes trails, trailheads, a camping area, an archery range, an amphitheater, interpretive kiosks, a playground, restrooms, picnic areas, and basketball and bocce ball courts. Despite the overcast and windy day, riders, both local and regional attended the grand opening.

Round 15 Comment Open: Public comment opened June 15 for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 15 expenditures. Written comments will be accepted until July 30, 2015. The SNPLMA funds are generated from the sale of public land in the Las Vegas Valley. The preliminary recommendations include expenditures of approximately \$42.4 million for a variety of conservation, restoration, and improvement projects throughout Nevada, and a set aside for a SNPLMA Special Account Reserve.

- Parks, Trails and Natural Areas - \$4,753,487
- Capital Improvements - \$5,560,635
- Conservation Initiatives - \$5,737,540
- Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisitions - \$12,230,400
- Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention - \$5,740,970
- Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration Project - \$4,155,412
- Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Implementation - \$1,291,523
- Special Account Reserve - \$3,000,000

Las Vegas Field Office

Land Sale a Success: On May 5, SNDO sold 357.59 acres in 13 parcels for \$19.22 million during a competitive public land sale. BLM offered 597.59 acres, in 29 parcels, under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). The parcels offered for sale varied in size 1.25 to 247.6 acres and were located in the Las Vegas Valley. In accordance with the SNPLMA, monies generated from the sale of public land may be used for specific purposes

including parks, trails, and natural areas; capital improvements, conservation initiatives; and for the purchase of environmentally sensitive lands. Additionally, 10 percent of the funds will go to the Southern Nevada Water Authority, and five percent will go to the Nevada State General Education Fund.

LVFO Participates in Earth Science Education Workshops: In late March and early April, Las Vegas Field Office helped inspire teachers to instill students with a life-long love of earth science. Over the course of three days, a geologist assisted at Earth Science Teacher Workshops at Faith Lutheran Junior/Senior High School (which is also a Recreation and Public Purpose lease.) Since August 1984, the Nevada Division of Minerals and the Nevada Mining Association have co-sponsored annual Earth Science Education Workshops for teachers from all over Nevada. Teachers enrolled in the Earth Science Education Workshops can receive Nevada Department of Education recertification, Professional Development (PDE) (School District), or university (UNR or UNLV) credit.

Pahrump Field Office

Landfill South of Beatty Patented to State of Nevada: The Pahrump Field Office successfully processed a 400-acre patent to the State of Nevada for land surrounding an active, 80-acre state landfill site 10 miles south of Beatty. This Recreation and Public Purpose Act patent, which was signed on June 15, 2015 by the Nevada BLM State Office, satisfies a request from the State of Nevada dating back to June 26, 1961. The existing 80-acre landfill site has continuously and safely operated for more than 50 years, receiving, treating and disposing of hazardous and non-hazardous waste materials on the site. It is one of only a half-dozen such sites in the region and provides important public safety and environmental protection infrastructure for Nevada and surrounding states. The low population, arid climate, sparse vegetation, extremely deep groundwater table, and lack of perennial surface waters made this site a compatible use for this public purpose requirement.

Earth Day in Pahrump: Pahrump Field Office's Planning & Environmental Coordinator planned an awesome Earth Day event with the folks in Pahrump. We showcased a variety of things we do. Our fire crew was there with one of the engines, we had a tabletop display showing off various minerals, tortoise shell replicas, and lots and lots of informative handouts and goodies for folks to take home with them. Belvedere, an adopted burro, also made an appearance and folks loved being able to pet him and ask questions about adoptions, the animals themselves, and more about our management. Overall it was a very positive event and the weather even held off until we were all packed up and on the road.

Red Rock/Sloan Field Office

Campground Closed for Season: Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area's developed campground -- Red Rock Campground -- is scheduled to temporarily close from May 26 to September 4, 2015 during this low-usage period. Red Rock Campground is located within Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area approximately two miles east of the visitor center on State Route 159 (West Charleston Boulevard) and is the only developed campground within the conservation area.

Red Rock Visitation Soars: Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area usually is visited by a little more than one million people a year. 2015 has been a banner year so far and is set to break records. In January and February alone, Red Rock has had 90,000 more visitors than the year before.

BLM Signs MOU with Southern Nevada Mountain Biking Association: SNDO entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 1 with Southern Nevada Mountain Biking Association (SNMBA). The purpose of the MOU is to encourage sustainable use of public lands by mountain bike enthusiasts and other recreationists. The MOU authorizes SNMBA to maintain designated hiking, equestrian and mountain biking trails within Red Rock and Sloan National Conservation Areas. The MOU also encourages SNMBA to assist the BLM in facilitating education, outreach and other events that focus on conservation, recreation and natural resource based activities as they relate to mountain biking. The BLM and SNMBA will be meeting in the near future to establish trail maintenance standards and guidelines and to develop a maintenance schedule for approved trails.

Sloan Signs Agreement with Friends of Sloan Canyon: Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area entered into a Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) with the Friends of Sloan Canyon in May. The CMA sets the stage for a cooperative working relationship between the BLM and the Friends of Sloan with an emphasis on increasing volunteerism and promoting conservation and stewardship through providing educational/informational programs. In the weeks following signing the agreement, Friends of Sloan has hosted one on-the-ground volunteer restoration project as well as donated numerous hours towards the creation of informational materials that will be utilized in the future Sloan Contact Station.

Red Rock Day: With the support of the Friends of Red Rock Canyon (FORRC) and the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association, over 50 volunteers attended Red Rock Day on April 18, one of several volunteer public land day events held at the National Conservation Area. Volunteers from a student group at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, scout groups and the general public helped to restore and maintain portions of the Pine Creek Trail, one of the more popular trails for hiking and access to frequently used rock climbing routes. Volunteers helped to remove rocks along the trail to improve footing and build stone stairs to reduce erosion. After the event, volunteers and staff celebrated by having a lunch hosted by FORRC.

SNDO Hosts Sloan Canyon Implementation Open House: On May 27, Red Rock/Sloan Field Office hosted an open house on the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Implementation Management Strategy and initiated scoping on projects proposed to be completed by the end of the year. BLM was joined by partners, the City of Henderson and Friends of Sloan Canyon. On April 30, BLM released the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Implementation Management Strategy which provides new management scenarios that meet the intent of the Resource Management Plan as well as projected visitation with an emphasis on extending the life of the special account funding. Based on public input, the immediate priority is to improve access to Petroglyph Canyon. By the end of 2015, the goal is completion of an access road, installation of a temporary visitor contact station and added amenities (vault toilet, kiosk, increased parking).

Sloan Canyon Volunteer Projects: On April 15th, the Anthem Hiking Club installed trail signage to the newly built 701 trail in the Quo Vadis area of Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area. Six volunteers completed the trail signage with the installation of 27 signs. On April 24, Sloan volunteers worked in the Petroglyph Canyon area at the newly graded parking area. They installed some wooden posts along the newly developed dirt parking area into Petroglyph Canyon to prevent incursions from smaller motorized vehicles. They also worked on the graded dirt road that leads to the kiosk at the north entrance for ½ a mile to establish a smoother dirt surface that is hike friendly. The project was a success and the results improved the recreational experience for visitors to Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

Improvements to 13-Mile Scenic Drive: Red Rock/Sloan Field Office and Central Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration invite public comment on the Proposed Scenic Drive and Parking Lot Area Improvement Projects Environmental Assessment. The comment period is open through July 15, 2015. Open house meetings were held June 30. Some of the proposed projects analyzed in the environmental assessment include installing a one-way return road from Sandstone Quarry to the exit near the visitor center, repaving the 13-Mile Scenic Drive and associated public safety design improvements including new signage, improving vehicular access and circulation as well as restoring and expanding most parking lots along the scenic drive. The environmental assessment examines the resources in the project area, provides alternatives and analyzes the impacts of the alternatives.